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MCDHH NEWS

A Publication of the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Dr. Elizabeth Banta retires after 14 years of service

by Jonathan O'Dell, Director of Communication Access, Technology & Training Services

On Friday, the 17th of November, some sixty of Liz's family, friends and colleagues gathered at the Wayside Inn in Sudbury to celebrate her transition into what she remarked was "not an end, but a new beginning" after 14 years of service to the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She was the first and only Director of the Department of Case Management and Social Services, having set up the program from scratch when MCDHH opened its doors in 1986; from there, it has grown to include a Lead Case Manager, eight regional Case Managers, three Children's Specialists, an Intake/Case Referral Specialist, a liaison position to Verizon for certification of Special Telephone Equipment Distribution Program applications, and an Administrative Assistant. It is characteristic of Liz that her department was – and still is – dedicated to providing direct services, with a minimum of supervisory staff.

Liz's emphasis on providing direct quality services is nothing new to those who have known her throughout her distinguished career. Born in 1933 in Haganan, New York, Liz obtained her licensure as an R.N. in New York State in 1956, a B.S. in School Nurse Teaching the following year. In 1965, she earned an M.S. degree in Health Education, and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in Maternal and Child Health from Boston University followed in 1967. The capstone of this impressive academic career was a Doctorate in Education awarded her in 1984, also by Boston University.

Her academic career has mirrored her professional one. From 1956 to 1966 she was engaged as a School Nurse, then as a Supervisory School Nurse Teacher. Liz rarely did only one thing at a time, which explains how she was able to work as a part time instructor in two separate state universities during those years. From 1967 to 1986 she worked at the Perkins School for the Blind first as a Coordinator of Services to pre-school deaf-blind children, followed by successive and often overlapping positions as Parent Counselor, Assistant Coordinator, Consultant to Families, and others. Change for Liz came when, after having successfully started a placement program at Perkins to identify and place misdiagnosed or wrongly placed deaf/



Elizabeth Banta, EdD

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Commissioner Wood is honored at gala dinner

by Ruth Moore, Communication Access Training Specialist

The Learning Center for Deaf Children hosted its first gala dinner at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge. More than 200 people attended this event.

Commissioner Barbara Jean Wood, who graciously thanked all past and present colleagues at MCDHH as she accepted her award, was among those who were recognized for their contribution to improving the lives of people who are Deaf, late deafened and hard of hearing. Ms. Wood has been Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing since it was brought into being on July 1, 1986. Other honorees included the former governor of Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis, who was instrumental in the formation of the Commission, and

the Dunkin Donuts' corporation which has been a major force behind the success of Deaf Awareness Week's yearly Statewide Field Day. In addition, their continued financial support of the Caption Center's efforts to make the daily news broadcasts accessible through the use of real-time captioning is to be applauded.

Thanks to the two Masters of Ceremony, Brenda Schertz and Mark Sommer, the event proved highly successful. The Deaf *Pah!* Theatre received a standing ovation for their wonderful performance.

Mike Bello, Director of the Learning Center for Deaf Children, closed the evening by thanking everyone for supporting this special dinner and announced their plans to host a gala event next year. ■

Commissioner's Corner

by Barbara Jean Wood, MCDHH Commissioner

The end of 2000 and the beginning of a new year is an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come at the Commission. The retirement of Liz Banta, Director of Case Management means a new Director will be hired and may mean new approaches to the social services program at the Commission.

Change is inevitable, but real success comes out of shaping the change to improve what we deliver to our consumers. Just in the past two years, we have enhanced services in every department, some examples:

- Three new Children's Specialists, now with 360 clients.
- 20% increase in number of presentations to professionals and consumers
- Higher fill rate for interpreters and emergency referral.
- 30,000 names added to our mailing list.
- established computerized referral database now being implemented
- established new elderly outreach program with Deaf and hard of hearing Independent Living Centers.



These are just some of the improvements within the Commission and yet, more needs to be done. For example, we recognize that the supply of interpreters and CART providers is not adequate to meet the demand. That issue is becoming a central part of our focus and planning initiatives. In the next few months, you will see more on our efforts to meet this demand and we welcome your input.

Coincidentally, 2001 is the fifteenth anniversary of the Commission's founding. We will celebrate this milestone during the year and note the many achievements we have made over the years. The Commission has grown from a small office of dedicated staff to a multi-program operation with much to offer in the way of services. But, as always, the needs of our community of Deaf, hard of hearing, and late deafened come first.

With that in mind, we rededicate ourselves to providing a full range of services for all of our consumers: that includes balancing the demand for interpreters and CART providers with limited resources. This is the next plateau of service from the Commission.

In the meantime, I wish you and your family a safe and healthy New Year. ■

MCDHH Outreach Efforts continue...

by Ruth Moore

From July 1st to November 17th, 2000, MCDHH staff provided:

33 presentations
8 exhibits
2 panel discussion

At these events, over 1,200 people were educated on the ADA, communication access, and MCDHH's services. ■



Photograph: J. O'Dell

**Ruth Moore presenting to 125
Emergency Medical Technicians at
EMS Educators in Taunton.**

Celebration 2000: A Huge Success!

by Jonathan O'Dell, Director of CATTS

Celebration 2000, an event hosted by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services in recognition of the 10th anniversary of the passage into law of the Americans with Disabilities Act, was attended by over 1200 visitors, making the show a resounding success. Numerous national and international corporations from within the fields of service delivery, banking, assistive technology, health care and others were present to interview prospective employees and showcase their services.



Photograph: Jonathan O'Dell

**Commissioner Bartels of MRC talks with
Kristin Johnson at the MCDHH booth.**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing would like to thank those of our readers and consumers who attended the event and stopped by our booth. Your continued participation and support are vital to the success of the agency's mission, and the unprecedented turnout was very gratifying to all of our staff who worked to make this event possible. ■

Regulation and Legislative Update: November 2000

by Jeannine Dusombre, Legal Counsel to the Commissioner

1. Regulation Update:

(a) The Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing held two public hearings in October on the proposed regulations for Administrative Review and Fair Hearing for the Case Management Department. The purpose of the regulations is to provide an informal way to review agency action when a client of the agency is dissatisfied with the denial or delivery of case management services. The regulations are effective on December 8, 2000.

(b) As a result of the numerous legislative changes to Chapter 766, the state special education law, enacted through outside budget sections in the FY 2001 budget, (see your September Newsletter for a summary of some of the legislative changes), the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) is proposing changes to its regulations which were scheduled to become effective in September 2000. The Massachusetts Board of Education is soliciting public comment on the emergency regulation changes enacted by the Board on September 26, 2000 in:

- the State Special Education Regulations at 603 CMR 28.00, and
- the Program And Safety Standards For Approved Public Or Private Day And Residential Special Education School Programs at 603 CMR 18.00

Copies of the 603 CMR 28.00 regulations with emergency changes and the 603 CMR 18.00 regulations circulated as emergency regulations are available on the DOE's internet site at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/>. (Links under "What's New" dated 9/28/00.) Copies may also be obtained by calling (781) 388-6203.

2. Legislative Update:

SPECIAL EDUCATION BILLS OF INTERESTS:

The "Education Bill of Rights for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students (**H. 2865**), the Senate bills "Act Relative to Special Education, **S.208** and **S.309**, and the House bill, **H.2678** have still not been reported out of the Education Committee. It appears that there will be no further action this legislative year.

Representative Patricia D. Jehlen, of Somerville, states that she will re-file **H.2865** in early January 2001.

Other Bills of Interest include:

S.87, "Signs Warning of the Danger of Exposure to Amplified Sound in Health" was placed in a study as was **S.138** "An Act Relative to Annoying Communications."

S.394, "An Act to Provide Greater Consumer Protection Powers to Boards of Registration," **S.1881** "An Act to support citizens with disabilities and their families" and **H.458** "An Act to ensure Health Coverage for Certain Durable Medical Equipment" were recommended for passage, and remain at the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

H.5170, formerly **H.1965**, "An Act to Provide Health Care Plans & Policies Shall Cover Payment for Costs Arising From Speech, Hearing and Language Disorders" was engrossed in the House and Senate in late July and sits in the House waiting enactment. Once the House and Senate enact an engrossed bill, the bill is sent to the governor for his signature. The bill becomes law upon signature of the governor.

If the bill is not enacted before the end of the legislative year, it will need to be re-filed in January.

Persons interested in the passage of **H.5170** should contact their legislators. There is still time for passage of this bill in this legislative year. ■

C.A.R.T. Service...What is it?

By James O'Donnell, Deputy Commissioner

Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) is one of the most sought after service at the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The CART service provision has only existed for about a decade. However, this service has proved very popular with late deafened adults and members of the Deaf Community. The ease of reading a visual display of English as a mode of communication that captures dialogue verbatim is found to be very appealing.

CART providers are first trained as court reporters, then take specialized training which includes a mentoring process prior to becoming a CART provider. Unfortunately, there are only approximately twenty CART providers in Massachusetts today. Of these, the Commission has seven under contract. The CART provider contract was changed July 1, 2000 to increase the rate from \$50 to \$65 an hour based on the providers' qualifications. All seven of MCDHH contracted providers qualify for the \$65 an hour rate.

The problem remains; we do not have enough CART providers to satisfy the demand. Stephanie Clark, Director of Interpreter/CART Services and James O'Donnell have been meeting with the CART providers and in a workgroup with consumers to address this issue.

MCDHH is working with the Massachusetts Court Reporters Association (MCRA) to alleviate this problem. Some of the results of this cooperative effort are as follows:

- MCDHH and MCRA will co-sponsor training in the spring of 2001 for court reporters to become CART providers.
- Promote training and in-depth information on the field of CART provision to court reporters and students at schools of stenography.
- Seek to hire a CART provider(s) on contract to MCDHH for designated community jobs.
- Provide training on specialized situations for those CART providers now on contract.
- Encourage out-of-state providers to relocate to Massachusetts and become freelance CART providers.

MCDHH and its staff will continue their efforts to improve the supply of CART providers in the state and in the interim appreciate your patience and support. Please let us know if you have any suggestions that would help the Commission in its endeavor to improve this much-needed service to the community. ■



Photograph: Jonathan O'Dell

A CART Provider

Elizabeth Banta *Continued from page 1*

blind children, a Social Work position became available at Perkins and she was appointed as the school's first Social Worker. In a preview of what she was to do at MCDHH, she set up the program for scratch. When she left Perkins for MCDHH in 1986 after being recruited by former Deputy Commissioner Nan Robbins, the department numbered six social workers.

As Director, Liz combined a determination to provide MCDHH's consumers and clients with the highest level of services with an equally strong commitment to her department, and her staff. Her work ethic and enthusiasm for her job was exemplary, and a testament to her willingness to take on the challenging task of establishing programs and services where none existed before. In the process, she not only set up a program that has dramatically improved the quality of life of a great many of the Commonwealth's Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens; she has also furthered the professional careers of many of her former staff members who remain in touch with her to this day.

We wish her well as she turns from writing program directives to writing postcards, and hope that these will reach us from the many places she has so often said she would like to experience but somehow never found the time to actually visit. Lest we think that her life will now revolve around reading the newspaper at 10 A.M. on a workday (which she enjoys, by her own admission), she is already becoming excited about the prospect of – what else – teaching children in a local museum about the role of women in the American Revolution. She has been a mentor, guidance counselor and friend to many of us here at MCDHH, and we will envy the young children sitting around her knowing that they are being taught by a woman who has remained, all her life, the quintessential teacher. ■

Hearing Aid Services and Satisfaction Questionnaire

Dear Friend:

The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Persons who are Hard of Hearing or Late Deafened (RRTC), located in San Diego, and the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) at the Lexington School in New York, are collaborating on the attached survey. The purpose of this project is to improve our understanding of the hearing aid selection process, as well as the consumer's satisfaction with services received from hearing aid dispensers. By analyzing and disseminating this information, we hope to draw lessons that will result in greater consumer satisfaction and improved service delivery.

We would like to invite you to participate in this project. The attached questionnaire should take you approximately **5 minutes** to complete. Please answer all the questions as objectively as you can. There are no **wrong** answers. To ensure confidentiality, please do not put your name on the questionnaire. If you have any questions regarding this project or the questionnaire, please feel free to contact either Carren J. Stika, Ph.D., at the RRTC in San Diego, or Mark Ross, Ph.D., at the University of Connecticut. Dr. Stika can be reached either by phone (800.432.7619, Voice/TTY) or by email (cstika@cspp.edu). Dr. Ross can be reached via email at markross@uconnvm.uconn.edu.

When you have finished completing the questionnaire, please return it by mailing it to:

Carren J. Stika, Ph.D.
RRTC-SD
6160 Cornerstone Court East
San Diego, CA 92121-3725

Your participation in this important survey is greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

-
1. From whom did you purchase your **last** hearing aid(s)?
 - ☐ Hearing Instrument Specialist (formerly termed "hearing aid dealer")
 - ☐ Private Practice Audiologist in own office
 - ☐ Audiologist in Hospital, University Clinic, or Hearing & Speech Center
 - ☐ Audiologist in Ear, Nose & Throat Physician's Office
 - ☐ Other (*please indicate*) _____
 - ☐ I don't know dispenser's background or credentials
 2. Who recommended this particular person to you? _____
 3. **How many times** did you see this hearing aid dispenser in conjunction with the purchase of your present hearing aid? (*If process is still going on, circle current highest number.*)

<input type="checkbox"/> One time	<input type="checkbox"/> Two times	<input type="checkbox"/> Three times
<input type="checkbox"/> Four times	<input type="checkbox"/> Five times	<input type="checkbox"/> Six times
<input type="checkbox"/> Seven times	<input type="checkbox"/> Eight times	<input type="checkbox"/> More than eight times
 4. Estimate the **total number of hours** you consulted with this hearing aid dispenser in conjunction with the purchase of your present hearing aid. (*Include participation in any group program and telephone conversations.*)

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than one hour	<input type="checkbox"/> Four hours	<input type="checkbox"/> Eight hours
<input type="checkbox"/> One hour	<input type="checkbox"/> Five hours	<input type="checkbox"/> Nine hours
<input type="checkbox"/> Two hours	<input type="checkbox"/> Six hours	<input type="checkbox"/> Ten hours
<input type="checkbox"/> Three hours	<input type="checkbox"/> Seven hours	<input type="checkbox"/> More than ten hours
 5. Did you purchase a hearing aid for one or both ears?
 - ☐ One Ear
 - ☐ Both Ears
 6. How much did you pay for **one** hearing aid?

<input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1501-\$2000
<input type="checkbox"/> \$501-\$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$2001-\$2500
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1001-\$1500	<input type="checkbox"/> More than \$2500
 7. How long ago did you purchase your last hearing aid? _____

8. How **satisfied** were you with the services you received from this hearing aid dispenser?
- | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Definitely not satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Not satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Definitely satisfied | |
9. Would you recommend that a friend or relative consult with this particular hearing aid dispenser regarding the purchase of a hearing aid?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Possibly, but with reservations (*please explain*) _____
10. Please indicate whether or not you received or discussed the following information with the hearing aid dispenser from whom you purchased your current hearing aid(s). If you did not receive the service or information because your hearing aid dispenser **knew for certain** that you did not need it, please mark "**Not Needed**."
- | Yes | No | Not Needed | |
|-----|-----|------------|---|
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Provided a clear explanation of my current audiogram |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Provided satisfactory reason my particular hearing aid was selected |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Made certain I understood use of telephone coils ("T-switch") on hearing aids |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Explained use of directional microphones |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Informed me about other hearing assistive technologies (e.g., for the TV and telephone, Personal FM system; signaling and warning devices) |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Discussed care of the hearing aid |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Discussed care of the battery |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Discussed earmold hygiene |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Asked to complete a questionnaire to identify problems my hearing loss causes me |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Asked to complete a follow-up questionnaire after wearing the hearing aid to determine improvement |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Invited to participate in group meetings to help orient me to my new hearing aid(s) |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Discussed coping and communication strategies (including speechreading) |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Discussed with my spouse and/or other family member the specifics of my hearing loss and communication strategies |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Provided information about Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc. (SHHH), Association for Late Deafened Adults (ALDA), or other consumer resource |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Discussed communication strategies for dealing with my hearing loss at work |
| ___ | ___ | ___ | Other (<i>please specify</i>) _____ |
11. What services, if any, would you like to have received from your hearing aid dispenser but did not?

12. Were you informed that you had at least a 30-day trial period with your hearing aid(s)?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I Don't Know
13. How many hearing aid dispensers (both audiologists and hearing instrument specialists) have you seen prior to the present one? _____
14. How long have you been wearing a hearing aid? _____
15. What is your age? _____
16. How many years of school have you completed?
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than high school graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> College graduate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> Some graduate work or professional school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational/technical school graduate | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate or professional degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college | |
17. When seeking a professional who can help you with your hearing loss needs, do you distinguish between audiologists and hearing instrument specialists (formerly termed "hearing aid dealer")?
- ☐ Yes (*please explain*) _____
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Just Give Us A Call!

by Carole Rossick, Assistive Technology Specialist

In today's fast-paced world, people depend on a broad spectrum of telecommunications devices and services to stay in touch with one another. The invention of the telephone - the precursor of all telephony devices - by Alexander Graham Bell was driven by his desire to create a device to help his deaf wife hear. Mr. Bell's historic first call to Dr. Watson took place in Boston over a century ago; since then, they have become an indispensable part of modern life. Ironically enough, Dr. Bell's invention virtually excluded deaf, hard of hearing, persons with impaired speech from participating in the telecommunications revolution. In the late 1960's, a deaf inventor, Robert Weitbrecht, constructed a modem that allowed data transmissions to take place over traditional telephone lines, paving the way for the development of today's TTY (Teletypewriters, more accurately described as Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf, or TDD's) and Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS).

Massachusetts citizens who are Deaf, late deafened or hard of hearing and have access to a residential telephone line are eligible for free or reduced-cost telecommunications equipment such as TTY's/TDD's, VCO (Voice Carry Over) phones, hearing amplified phones, ring signalers, and other products. An application can be obtained by contacting Verizon's Special Telephone Equipment Distribution Program at the Verizon Center for Individuals with Disabilities, 800-974-6006 (V/TTY), or by calling Mary Macone at MCDHH.

Businesses and agencies interested in obtaining such equipment to make themselves accessible to consumers or employees can contact MCDHH for a list of vendors who carry an assortment of adaptive telephone equipment. There are a large variety of specialized TTY's, amplified phones, ring signal indicators and other telephony devices available, and it is important to be guided in the selection process by someone who knows the range of available technologies and the environment in which it will be used. It is not uncommon, for example, for a business to install a TTY and then be unable to answer an incoming call because they do not hear it "RING" (TTY's do not have internal ringers). In this scenario, being aware of that fact and knowing that several adjustable audible or visual ring signalers are on the market can make a tremendous difference.



Photograph: Jonathan O'Dell

teletypewriter (TTY)

After purchasing a TTY, a business is well advised to obtain instruction for staff on the use of the new equipment, which can include training staff on how to recognize an incoming TTY call; how to answer the call and transfer it to the appropriate extension, and how to compose, store and send outgoing TTY messages, among other topics. Such training can often be negotiated as part of the purchase of a TTY from a vendor. All

TTY's and most other telephony equipment also come with detailed instruction manuals, which should be studied carefully. Introductory level, open captioned instruction videotapes are also available.

To see some of these products in use, or to request TTY training, please contact your local DHILS (Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services) program. If you are unsure of who to contact, please call Ray Reed at MCDHH to receive a complete list of all DHILS centers. In addition, it makes a good business sense to learn how to receive and place telephone calls using a TRS (Telecommunications Relay Services). By simply dialing 711, for example, you are connected to a MassRelay operator who acts as a "translator" between TTY users on the one hand and voice callers on the other. In addition to purchasing the appropriate equipment, receiving such training can be a lucrative business strategy as the segment of the population who are Deaf, late deaf and hard of hearing is considerable, and growing as the population ages. Contact MassRelay Outreach at 800-439-0415 V/TTY, 781-399-2435 FAX, or e-mail at "Outreach@massrelay.org" to set up a presentation. ■

OTHER NEWS OF INTEREST:

The DOE's Office on Special Education established a workgroup to develop a document, which will serve as guidelines to assist teachers on how best to evaluate deaf and hard of hearing students to determine eligibility for special education.

The Workgroup consisted of specialists in the field of deafness and included representatives from Children Hospital Medical Center, The Learning Center, Willie Ross, Clark School, CASE Collaborative and other schools, NECC, Smith College, Boston University, MSAD, parents, and MCDHH Staff including the Director and Case Managers for Family and Children's Services. ■

Visit our Website:

<http://www.state.ma.us/mcdhh>

Our Email:

MCDHH.Office@state.ma.us

Looking for Work? www.state.ma.us/mcdhh/opportunities.htm

Are you employed and have a hearing loss?

We need your help.

We want to learn about how your hearing loss affects you in the workplace. The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Persons who are Hard of Hearing or Late Deafened is funded by the federal government to learn more about the employment status of individuals with hearing loss. We need your help with our research! You will earn a small stipend for your time. If you are interested, please contact Carren J. Stika, Ph.D. by phone: 800.432.7619 (Voice/TTY) or by email: cstika@cspp.edu.

The **Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing** is currently seeking applicants from across the state to serve on the MCDHH Statewide Advisory Council (SAC).

The SAC serves in an advisory capacity to the Commissioner and her staff by advising on the needs of the consumer, statewide. Members offer comment to assist the agency in obtaining consumer perspective on issues, policies and procedures of MCDHH, newly identified needs, etc. Members are asked to volunteer their service for a two-year time frame. Members should be willing to learn about issues and to offer observations and opinions.

The law requires that the MCDHH SAC be composed of an equal number of consumers who are Deaf, late deafened, oral deaf, and Hard of Hearing, along with representation of the interests of parents, and interpreters for the Deaf. Areas that must be covered are (1) various levels of hearing loss (2) language choice (3) statewide representation and (4) special interest groups, such as minorities and parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children.

If you would like to be considered in serving as a member of the SAC, please send your resume and a letter of interest to April Spencer, MCDHH, 150 Mount Vernon Street, Suite 550, Boston, MA 02125.

Happy New Year

Address service requested

